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Ms Carol Chambers, President of my Jama’at – Lord Shahid Aziz, members of the Horsham Interfaith Committee, other ladies and gentlemen, I greet you with the Islamic greeting, Assalaamu alai-kum, which means may the peace (and blessings of God, the One) be with you. This is the same greeting with which Prophet Jesus greeted his disciples in the Bible (John 20:21).

It is a pleasure to see so many of you, and I know some of you have travelled many miles to be here, so I thank you for your sacrifice.

I begin in the name of God, the One, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

I will commence today’s talk with a “Prayer of Peace” attributed to St Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master! Grant that I may not so much seek To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

I would fail in my duty if I did not relate to you how this event has come to fulfilment. Without a doubt we are here today by the permission of God and we will return home safely with His love and permission. As God-conscious individuals, this we cannot deny. But we are here because of a brief encounter with a remarkable lady whose love for God and love for humanity know no bounds. This is no other than Jenny Turner. A chance meeting between the both of us in an ECG cubicle at Harefield
BUILDING BRIDGES through inter-religious dialogue
A talk and discussion by
Nasra Joanna Ali

Saturday 30th April 2016
at 1pm

St Johns RC Church Hall
3 Springfield Road
Horsham RH12 2PJ

All are welcome
Admission is free
Afternoon tea following the meeting

For further details visit
www.horsham-interfaith.org.uk
or ring Carol on 01403 218670

NAZRA JOANA ALI
Joanna was born in the beautiful dual islands of Trinidad and Tobago before coming to the UK to pursue a career in nursing. She is now a cardiographer at Harefield Hospital. She is a member of The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, a branch of Sunni Islam which was the first to have a female give the Friday Sermon during Ramadhan. Her passion is to serve humanity and to help people to understand their value and worth in life.
Hospital has culminated in this event because she wanted to know if Islam encourages its followers to carry out such heinous crimes as seen on television.

The topic I have chosen to talk about this afternoon is “Building bridges through inter-religious dialogue”. The reason for this topic is due to a breakdown in inter-religious harmony and disregard for human lives as has become evident in the atrocities in the world today, predominantly done in the name of religion, and specifically Islam.

Historically, and unfortunately, human suffering has become associated by misperception with every religion. For many years political instability in Northern Ireland, the Israel-Palestinian issues, the Sri Lankan divide, unresolved land issues in Kashmir, and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia have seen some of the worst loss of innocent lives associated with religion. However, over the last twenty years or so, Islam as a faith has suffered at the hands of its followers and continues to do so and consequently the world is now engulfed by Islam phobia.

The reason for this is that Muslims, after they lost political power at the end of the Ottoman Empire, suffered humiliation, and instead of correcting their faults and competing with the West in pursuit of knowledge and progress, resorted to ways and means which were against the dictates of the Qur’an and the example of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). One of the most damaging concepts which permeated the Muslim political thought was, and is, to gain political dominance at any cost. Forgotten is the golden principle of the Qur’an: “Surely Allah changes not the condition of a people, until they change their own condition” (13:11).

If Muslims in the twenty-first century want to rebuild the tarnished image of themselves and their faith they need to ask some hard and pertinent questions, such as:

• Does the Qur’an encourage its followers to participate in inter-religious dialogue, and does it encourage inter-religious harmony?

• Did the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) participate in inter-religious dialogue and promote inter-religious harmony?

The answer to the first question is found in (Chapter 3 of) the Qur’an:

“Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you, that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords besides Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)” (The Family of Amran: 64)

Here the Qur’an addresses Jews and Christians as people to whom Books and Prophets were sent, encouraging them to have dialogue with Muslims, thus promoting inter-religious harmony. The verse encourages the members of the Abrahamic faiths to look to the original message of their scriptures and come to an agreement as to the worship of the One God.

The Qur’an even goes so far as to tell us how to conduct these discussions:

“And do not argue with the People of the Book except in the best manner, save with those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him do we submit” (29:46).
The tone of our discussion during our dialogue should be such that we should not raise our voices at one another and should not offend one another with our speech, even if we were to differ on doctrinal issues. So, to unite us the Qur’an says to come to agreements, to focus on what we should agree on.

The Bible addresses God as The One:

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

And the Qur’an says: “Say, He, Allah, is One” (112:1).

The Holy Prophet of Islam promotes dialogue by saying:

“Difference of opinion amongst my people is indeed a blessing.”

This is endorsed by the Qur’an, as well:

“And if thy Lord had pleased, He would have made people a single nation. And they cease not to differ” (5:48).

Here the Qur’an states that God purposely did not make us one single nation agreeing on every issue, but He made us different with different opinions, different likes and dislikes, and allowed us to think and develop the power to search out hidden knowledge, the beauties of nature, and ways to foster mutual love and harmony. Interestingly, some of us who are scientifically-inclined have come to a conclusion that God does not exist! Our free will and extensive experiments have led us to conclude that creation and evolution work without any direction or cause.

**Latent harmony among human beings**

The Qur’an tells us:

“O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know one another. Surely, the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware” (49:13).

None of us here can deny that we do not have parents, so a male and a female are responsible for our being here. We can identify one another by our phenotype (physical feature) – our tribe – and we have become families through marriages and inter-marriages, and thus inter-relationship educates us to manage and tolerate one another in spite of differences of opinion and temperament, that is, through love and social bonds fostered by inter-marriage.

Most importantly, the Qur’an says that “the noblest of you is the most dutiful of you.” Here the Qur’an addresses all people of all faiths and specially states that our duty to humanity is what endears us in the sight of God.

The Bible points out the common basis of belief to encourage inter-religious and inter-communal dialogue and harmony – that we all worship the God of Adam and Abraham:

“The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations” (Exodus 3:15).
And the Qur’an endorses it thus:

“Do they then seek other than Allah’s religion? And to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will be returned. Say: We believe in Allah and that which is revealed to us, and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we submit” (3:83-84).

Additionally, the Holy Prophet of Islam and his followers have been commanded in the Qur’an to believe and obey the Divine revelation and the messengers without any distinction:

“The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord and so do the believers. They all believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His messengers. We make no difference between any of His messengers. And they say: We hear and obey…” (2:285).

For the answer to the second question, whether the Holy Prophet Muhammad participated in inter-religious dialogue and promoted inter-religious harmony, we have to look at his life and see what was his attitude and behaviour in this regard.

The Prophet’s first meeting with a Christian priest
This occurred when Muhammad was a young boy and had joined his uncle Abu Talib’s merchant caravan to Syria. The Christian whom he met on the journey was a monk by the name of Bahira, who was living in Bostra, a Roman colonial city. Bahira was known for his belief that a prophet was soon to appear among the Arabs. He had studied old scriptures, from where he had learnt about the coming of a final prophet. His deep scriptural knowledge and intelligent observation convinced him that this child would be that promised prophet in his own time. He told Muhammad’s uncle to take him back to Makkah as soon as possible in order to guard him against potential enemies.

Another significant meeting with a Christian
When the Holy Prophet received the first revelation, it had a great impact on him. After this extraordinary experience, he went home trembling. His wife Khadijah later took him to Waraqa ibn Naufal, his distant cousin and a learned Christian monk. After listening to what the Holy Prophet had experienced, Waraqa said that it was the same Gabriel, the Angel of Revelation, who had come to Moses with divine revelation. Waraqa was a righteous person and had converted from paganism to Christianity and was well-versed in religious literature. He encouraged Muhammad and assured him that God would protect him in his mission.

Muslims as refugees in a Christian country
When the Messenger of God began to preach his message openly, the Makkan pagans started to severely oppose him and his small band of followers. They resorted to all sorts of tortures and persecution, and made the Muslims’ living hard and difficult. Several Muslims were put to death by torture and most of them were humiliated and socially alienated. Things became so unbearable that the Holy Prophet realised that Makkah was becoming a difficult place for Muslims to live in. He decided to send some of them to Abyssinia, especially those who had no effective protection. Abyssinia at that time was ruled by a Christian who was kind and just. At the outset, eleven Muslims immigrated to Abyssinia. Later, they were joined by about eighty-three others – women and men.
The Makkans followed them and tried to persuade the King against these Muslims. Ja’far ibn Abi Talib, as leader of the immigrants, gave the King a letter from the Holy Prophet. The King welcomed the immigrants and promised to protect them from their enemies. The next day, the Makkans tried to incite the king by telling him that these “heretics” from Makkah did not look upon Jesus as God but as a prophet. On that occasion Ja’far recited verses 16 to 23 of the Qur’an from the chapter Mary. After listening to the verses, the Negus picked up a straw, and pointing to it, remarked: “Jesus is in fact not even this much more than the Muslims have described him to be.”

Here we see that Muslims fled to a Christian country as refugees for safety. Today, we see a similar exodus happening where refugees are coming to Europe from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

**Prophet Muhammad’s peace agreement with the Christians of Najran**

In 10 A.H. (631 CE), Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) received in Madinah a delegation of sixty Christians from Najran who were mainly religious scholars. Najran was a predominantly Christian city in the south of Arabia. The delegation was received in the Prophet’s mosque, and was allowed to pray in it.

They discussed with the Holy Prophet points of Christian doctrines, including the nature of God. In his response to them, the Holy Prophet recited verse 2 of chapter 3 of the Holy Qur’an, *The Family of Amran*:

“Allah, there is no god but He, the Ever-living and the Self-subsisting, by Whom all subsists.”

The Oneness of God was explained in a simple and comprehensive manner:

“Say: He, Allah, is One. Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is like Him” (Ch. 112: *The Unity*).

Further discussion on the nature of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) led to some disagreements, to which the Prophet recited to the visitors three verses of the Qur’an from the Chapter *The Family of Amran* (3:59-61). After three days, the Christian delegation decided not to continue the discussion and returned home.

This was a time when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was in full control of the region, but in spite of doctrinal disagreements, he concluded a treaty with the Christians of Najran. The treaty provided religious and administrative autonomy for non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic State.

**Al-Qaeda and ISIS out to disrupt peace**

This is totally opposite to what we see today. Al-Qaeda and ISIS, ruthlessly forcing people of other faiths and mostly their own people to accept their way of thought at the point of death.

Apparently they justify their inhuman actions by misterpreting the teachings of the Qur’an, but in fact they totally defy and go against the very teachings of Islam. Islam means peace, and the Qur’an establishes a perennial relationship with people of other faiths through prophets and divine revelation vouchsafed to them for guidance and social upliftment. The Qur’an makes a pertinent reference to the monks and priests of the ‘People of the Book’ by which it means Jews and Christians, and acknowledges their godliness, humility and truthfulness in these words:
“And you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to the believers to be those who say, We are Christians. That is because there are priests and monks among them, and because they are not proud. And when they hear that which has been revealed to the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) you will see their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth they recognise” (5:82,83).

And elsewhere the Qur’an goes a step forward and does not deny that there is good in others and they will be equally rewarded for good deeds:

“They are not all alike. Of the People of the Book there is an upright party who recite Allah’s messages in the night-time and they adore (Him). They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin good and forbid evil and vie with another in (doing) good deeds. And those are among the righteous. And whatever good they do, they will not be denied it. And Allah knows those who keep their duty” (3:112-114).

The Qur’an urges Muslims to carry on inter-religious dialogue with wisdom and in the best possible manner:

“Call to the ways of your Lord with wisdom and Godly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord knows best him who strays from His path, and He knows best those who go aright” (16:125).

Islam guarantees religious freedom for all Faiths

Today we see in the media suicide bombings at public places: schools, places of worship, shrines and recreation areas. Terrorist organisations, especially the Taliban and ISIS, are trying to create a so-called ‘Islamic state’ by enforcing a unilateral rule, where an Islam of their interpretation will be forced on Muslims and non-Muslims. To achieve their objective they are forcing non-Muslims to accept Islam and are destroying places of historical interest and places of worship, which they think are promoting non-Islamic norms. None of this type of behaviour is at all supported or encouraged in any way by the Qur’an or the conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbruh). The Qur’an makes it mandatory to safeguard the religious freedom of followers of other faiths and their places of worship and people serving them. It clearly condemns religious persecution, and in order to safeguard religious freedom allows Muslims to fight against those who perpetrate such atrocious acts:

“Permission to fight is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed … and are driven from their homes without a just cause … And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered would have been pulled down” (22:39, 40).

So the Qur’an not only enjoins inter-religious dialogue with followers of other religions but it even goes so far as to allow within certain limits inter-marriage and the food of the People of the Book. So building bridges and having inter-faith dialogue and ensuring religious freedom are essential components of the peace programme of Islam. The Qur’an explicitly says:

“There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256).

Truly conscious Muslims who understand the true message of Islam – a message of human dignity and mutual respect; the Islam as taught and lived by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbruh) – have been shunned by the so-called Islamic world today. It appears that Muslims would rather be recognised for their outer garment than for their inner piety.
A pious soul can lead
I am here today because of a pious Christian woman who disliked Muslims for what they are doing to the world but saw Islam not in my outer garment but from my heart. We share love for each other and for humanity. Why then can’t we all have love for one another and respect one another’s faith? We all believe in the prophets and in our Books; we believe in Adam and Eve, and in Abraham and his family; in Mary and Jesus.

We all believe in ashes to ashes, dust to dust, from God we came and to Him we shall return.

We all believe in the purification of the soul, a concept found in all scriptures. In the

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Qur’an it is called “the soul at rest”; the Bible addresses it as

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8);

in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism it is called nirvana. The Torah too speaks of purification of the soul.

In all scriptures God refers to Himself as “the One God”, the Supreme Being, the Originator and the Sustainer of all the worlds.

The Qur’an and Mary
For those who do not know the Qur’an, an entire chapter is dedicated to Mary, wherein, among other things, it says:

“O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the world” (3: 42).

Elsewhere in the Qur’an God addresses people of all faiths:

“And the servants of (Allah), Most Gracious, are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, ‘Peace!’ ” (25: 63).

Therefore, without dialogue among people of all faiths and even of no faith, the vacuum in communication and understanding cannot possibly be removed and humanity will consequently suffer due to mistrust, prejudice, bigotry and racism. Without dialogue and mutual respect, extremism and hatred cannot be eradicated.

In order to usher in change, we need to understand and appreciate one another with open hearts. If we, as people of different faiths who are conscious of a Creator, do not work together to bring about love, peace, respect and harmony, our next generation will suffer more for want of mutual understanding and co-existence.

We need to revisit our Scriptures
We have to stand together to defeat terrorism of every kind. Let this be the first of many interfaith services.

The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam will be hosting an interfaith service in November 2016 and we extend an invitation to all of you. The theme will be “How does my religion promote peace?” Let us go one step further and have a multi-religious family day and demonstrate to the world how to live in a multi-religious and multi-cultural society in the twenty-first century.
I end my talk today just as I started, with Peace be onto you, *Shalom, Sita Ram, Satsriakal,* and *Assalamu alaikum.*

Thank you for your attention.

* * *

**LETTERS OF THANKS**

1st May, 2016  
Carol Chambers  
Horsham Interfaith Forum  
Horsham  
Hello Nazra,

Hope you made it back OK with no traffic jams! Thank you again for coming down to give us your talk and also for all of your supporters. We could have gone on all afternoon chatting, but we have the hall for free for a stipulated time.

I am forwarding you this message that Nigel has sent to his contact at Radio Sussex - hopefully it will have or going on air on Sunday.

Would it be possible for you to send me your talk - you made references to the Koran. A couple of people would like to look up those verses – it would be wonderful if you could.

Thank you for your gift & card which I will share at our next committee meeting and the book your husband gave me. I pray that all continues well with you and your family and that we may meet again - in peace and friendship.

*  

**Mr. Nigel Tomsett**  
Horsham Interfaith Committee, Horsham  
Good Morning  
Thank you for support of our events in the past. You have always advertised our events on your programme.

I would just like to report on our event yesterday when we had a talk by Nazra Joanna Ali on ‘Building Bridges’. She is a member of the Lahore Ahmadyya Movement in Islam and a branch of Sunni Islam. The meeting was full to overflowing at St Johns RC Church Hall with an atmosphere of love and understanding. A breath of fresh air in troubled times and showed that there is a will for harmony from people of faith. Long may we continue our fight.

* * *
NEWS FROM THE BERLIN MOSQUE, GERMANY

BRIEF REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES DURING THE MONTHS OF MARCH TO MAY 2016

IMAM AMIR AZIZ AL-AZHARI

1st March
Students from a Local School from Berlin visited the Berlin Mosque. Mr. Mudassar Aziz presented a brief introduction about the mosque and Islam. Students asked questions about Islam, Paris incident and new year night untoward assault in Germany. It was explained that such incidents have nothing to do with Islam. They were happy to know about the true teachings of Islam.

3rd March
Students with their teacher from Campus Berufsbildung e.V. (Vocational Training Trust) visited the Berlin Mosque. Brief history of the Mosque and introduction about Islam was presented to them. Later students asked questions mainly about equal rights of women in Islam.

4th March
Referentin für feministische Politik und Kulturpolitik (Consultants for feminist politics and cultural policy) invited Mr. Mudassar Aziz to a seminar. Topic for discussion was “Women in Religion”. In question / answer session position of women in Islam was explained to them in the light of the Qur’an and practice of the Holy Founder of Islam.

8th March
A group of Evangelische-Lutherische Kirche from Finland (Evangelic Church of Finland) visited the Berlin mosque. They were presented brief history of the Mosque and introduction about Islam. Later they asked questions about the history of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. They also asked questions about the Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement.

12th March
A group of 20 students and teachers of different Universities from Sweden visited the Berlin Mosque. They were given presentation for one hour which was appreciated. All participants were given a copy of “Islam, Peace and Tolerance” by Dr. Zahid Aziz.

Mr. Mudassar Aziz was invited to an exhibition in Zossen organized by the local government. It was organized at a place where Germany’s first mosque was built in 1912 by the German Government for the Indian soldiers fighting in World War I. Mr. Mudassar Aziz was introduced as official representative of the Oldest working mosque in Germany. This event was very informative.

18th March
A Berlin based musical group visited the Berlin Mosque to record the Azan. They are working on a project ‘Call for Prayer in Religions’. An Iraqi brother who regularly comes to the Jumu’ah prayer was asked to recite the Azan. They were highly impressed by the acoustic system of the Mosque especially when the recitation of the Azan and the Qur’an is made.
25th March
Danish YMCA students visited the Berlin Mosque. They were given detailed explanation about Islam and the message of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam to propagate Islam peacefully in the world. The students showed interest to know Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's concept of peace through universal message of religions. Later they asked questions about current issue of Syria. True concept of Jihad in Islam was explained to them. Copies of “Islam, Peace and Tolerance” by Dr. Zahid Aziz were presented to them.

31st March
Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) (www.hwpl.kr) Berlin invited Mr. Mudassar Aziz to take part in a dialogue. The theme was: What is the role of religious leaders in order to achieve peace. He presented the ideas based on the book, Paighaam-i-Sulh (Message of Peace) by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. The approach to this topic was appreciated by all participants.

4 April
A group of 18 visitors from Norway with local a guide from Berlin visited the Berlin Mosque. They came to know about our mosque through an article written as "Hidden Beauty of Berlin" in a Norway magazine. They asked questions about equality of women in Islam and position of our community in Islam. Both questions were explained in the light of Quran and other scriptures.

6th April
A Group of Old people from Old People House in Berlin visited the Berlin Mosque. A brief presentation about the Mosque and Religion of Islam was given to them.

10th April
Ms. Anne Meldgaard, a journalist from Denmark, visited the Berlin mosque. She interviewed Mr. Mudassar Aziz and the priest of the Danish church, which is in our neighbourhood. It was published in a Denmark newspaper. After the interview she was presented copies of The Religion of Islam by Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali and Islam, Peace and Tolerance by Dr. Zahid Aziz.

15th April
Students of Annie Hauser School from Berlin visited the Berlin Mosque. A brief presentation about Islam and history of the Berlin Mosque was given. Later Question & Answer session was held. They asked questions about heaven and hell, why God is hidden and current issue of Syria. They were presented copies of “Islam, Peace and Tolerance” by Dr. Zahid Aziz.

20th April
Students from Loughborough University UK visited the Berlin Mosque. Theme of tour was “Migration”. A brief presentation about the Berlin Mosque was given. Later they asked questions about difference between our Community and that of the Qadian Community. They were presented copies of “True Succession” by Dr. Zahid Aziz.
24th April
Students from Konfirmandengruppe, Evanglische visited the mosque. A brief presentation and Q&A session was conducted. They asked questions about the current issue of Syria. They were presented copies of “Islam, Peace and Tolerance” by Dr. Zahid Aziz.

26th April
Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) Berlin invited Mr. Mudassar Aziz to take part in a dialogue. The theme was: War and Peace according to each religious text. The dialogue was very interesting and fruitful. Many participants appreciated concept of Jihad in Islam as presented by our Movement.

28th April
It was a great day. Grand -daughter of the architect Karl Augustus Herman (who designed the Berlin Mosque) visited the Mosque. She was very happy and proud to be in the Mosque designed by his late grand-father and which is now highly appreciated by visitors from Europe and other countries. She is standing left to Mr. Mudassar Aziz in photo on p.16 given at the bottom of the page.

Thursday 19th May
More than sixty men and women organized an alumnae programme in the Berlin Mosque. They included people who got scholarships to study in various parts of the world. The discussion was about the Message of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement for the West. It lasted for one and half hours and most of the people took part in the discussion.

Later on they arranged dinner and socializing programme. During the discussion questions were asked about Islam, role of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in reinterpreting Islam in modern times . The Group included people from Bulgaria, Iran and Germany. Copies of the English translation of the Quran were presented to some of the participants.

The same day 59 students from Veile School Ungdoms Center from Denmark with their teachers visited the Berlin Mosque in the morning. There was one hour lecture about Islam followed by question/ answer session.

13th May
Teachers and students from the University of Applied Sciences, Potsdam, Berlin came to listen to the Friday Sermon. They were impressed by the views of Islam presented in the sermon. They joined the Friday prayer as well. After prayer interesting discussion was held. They appreciated the enlightened views of Islam and agreed that universal concepts of Islam can rightly be the basis for mutual understanding and better relations between followers of various faiths.

9th May
Students and teachers of Merian School from Berlin visited the Berlin Mosque. A brief presentation about Islam and the history of the Berlin Mosque was presented. A copy of the German translation of the Quran was presented for the School Library.
15th May
Last Sunday on 15th May Dr. Ronen Steinke, Editor, Foreign Policy of Süddeutsche Zeitung (South Germany News Paper) visited the Berlin Mosque. It is one of the leading newspapers of South Germany. He works in München which is six hours away from Berlin. He is interested in the history of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Germany. The meeting lasted for two hours. He interviewed Mr. Amir Aziz Al-Azhari regarding the history of the Movement. Copies of the English translation of the Quran, History of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Europe (German), History of Mosque (German) by Mr. Nasir Ahmad and “Islam Peace and Tolerance” (English) by Dr. Zahid Aziz were presented to him. He will be writing history of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Germany in the light of what was discussed and presented in the books.

The same day a French visitor with his daughter visited the Berlin mosque. He showed interest in the work of our organization being done for bringing followers of other faiths closer for creating peace and harmony. He was presented a copy of the French translation of “Islam, Peace and Tolerance” by Dr. Zahid Aziz.
May Allah bless you all.

Ahmad Nawaz, Hayward, California

I have just finished reading the February 2013 issue of the HOPE Bulletin dedicated to the memory of the late Br. Akbar Abdullah. I must say that your team has worked very hard to collect facts about the life and contributions made by our late Br. Akbar. The formatting of the Bulletin and photographs have made it very impressive and visual. Br. Akbar deserved such a beautiful dedication.

I wish to congratulate you for making the Bulletin more than just a news bulletin. The brief life history of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) by our new sister in the fold of Islam, Christine Backer, is very impressive and shows how his Perfect Example has inspired her thoughts and behaviour. I am sure her book "From MTV to Mecca" must be worth reading. Thanks for introducing the autobiography of a highly popular figure in the Western media, who, by her own study, has adopted Islam, and is facing challenges with firm faith and conviction.

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ISLAM stands for: I SHALL LOVE ALL MANKIND

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